

ETIQUETTES OF DU‘Ā

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Du‘ā is a great blessing of Allāh ﷻ bestowed upon His bondsmen. It is the essence of worship and the weapon of the believer. It removes difficulties and prevents them from coming in the future. It increases one’s trust and conviction in Allāh ﷻ, brings one closer to Him ﷻ and increases one’s love for Him ﷻ.

Du‘ā is so beloved to Allāh ﷻ that along with commanding His servants to carry it out, Allāh ﷻ at the same time promises to accept it. Allāh ﷻ has said in the Glorious Qur’ān,

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ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

Call unto Me, I will answer you. (40:60)

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا

دَعَانِ

And when My servants ask you, (O Muḥammad), concerning Me - indeed I am near. I answer the supplication of the supplicant when he calls unto Me... (2:186)

This is why every servant should hold fast to du‘ā and make it an important part of his life. One should also keep in mind that du‘ā is a form of worship and should be made with its etiquettes, as worship of any form can only be perfect when performed with its etiquettes. When a worship becomes perfect, the chances of it being accepted in the Court of Allāh ﷻ increase greatly.

Etiquettes of Du‘ā

1. To make du‘ā in the state of wuḍū

One should try to supplicate to Allāh ﷻ in the state of wuḍū, as this is what we find in the life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. During the Battle of Awṭās, Sayyidunā Abū ‘Āmir ؓ was struck on the knee by an arrow as a result of which he passed away and became a martyr. Before breathing his last, he instructed Sayyidunā Abū Mūsā Al-Ash‘arī ؓ to go and request Nabī ﷺ to supplicate for his forgiveness. Sayyidunā Abū Mūsā Al-Ash‘arī ؓ came to Nabī ﷺ and informed him as to what

had happened and informed him of the request of Sayyidunā Abū ‘Āmir رضي الله عنه. Nabī ﷺ asked for some water and performed wuḍū. He then lifted his hands and made the following du‘ā, ‘O Allāh! Forgive ‘Ubayd Abū ‘Āmir.’ (Al-Bukhārī)

2. To face the qiblah

One should endeavour to face the qiblah when making du‘ā. Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه reports that Rasūlullāh ﷺ faced towards the Ka‘bah and then made du‘ā against a group of the Quraysh. (Al-Bukhārī)

3. To raise the hands

Raising the hands in du‘ā gives a greater chance of it being accepted in the Court of Allāh ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَيِّيٌّ كَرِيمٌ يَسْتَحْيِي إِذَا رَفَعَ الرَّجُلُ إِلَيْهِ يَدَيْهِ أَنْ
يُرَدَّهُمَا صِفْرًا خَائِبَتَيْنِ

Indeed, Allāh has the most ḥayā and is Most-Generous. When a person raises his hands to Him (in du‘ā), He feels shy to return them empty and deprived. (At-Tirmidhī)

We also learn from the blessed Aḥādīth how the hands should be raised in du‘ā. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

سَلُوا اللَّهَ بِبُطُونِ أَكْفِكُمْ، وَلَا تَسْأَلُوهُ بِظُهُورِهَا

Ask Allāh with the inside of your palms and not the outside (i.e. with the palms facing upwards). (Abū Dāwūd)

Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه has said,

الْمَسْأَلَةُ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ يَدَيْكَ حَذَوِ مَنْكَبَيْكَ أَوْ نَحْوَهُمَا

(The way) to ask (from Allāh ﷻ) is that you lift your hands level with your shoulders or near to them. (Abū Dāwūd)

Regarding the positioning of the hands, the ‘Ulamā have written that they should not be joined together completely, rather there should be a small gap in between.

Therefore, the hands should be lifted in front of the chest facing upwards and a small gap should be kept in between them.

4. To praise Allāh ﷻ and to recite ṣalāt ‘alan-Nabī at the beginning and end of du‘ā

Sayyidunā Salamah ibnul-Akwa‘ ﷺ said, ‘I did not hear Rasūlullāh ﷺ make a du‘ā except that he would start it with the following praise:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى الْعَلِيِّ الْوَهَّابِ

Pure is my Rabb from all imperfections Who is the Most-High, the Most-Bestowing.’ (Aḥmad)

Regarding ṣalāt ‘alan-Nabī, Sayyidunā ‘Umar ﷺ has said,

إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ مَوْقُوفٌ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَصْعَدُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ، حَتَّى تُصَلِّيَ عَلَى نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Indeed, du‘ā is halted between the heavens and earth; nothing from it rises, until you do not send salutations upon your Nabī ﷺ. (At-Tirmidhī)

Sayyidunā Fuḍālah ibn ‘Ubayd ﷺ narrates, ‘Whilst Rasūlullāh ﷺ was sat (in the masjid), a man entered and performed ṣalāh. He then said, “O Allāh! Forgive me and have mercy upon me.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “O the one who has performed ṣalāh! You have hastened. When you have performed ṣalāh

and sat (after ṣalāh), then praise Allāh with words that He is deserving of and send ṣalāt upon me, then supplicate to Him.” After that, another person (came and) performed ṣalāh. He then praised Allāh and sent ṣalāt upon Nabī ﷺ. Nabī ﷺ said, “O the one who has performed ṣalāh! Make du‘ā, your du‘ā will be accepted.” (At-Tirmidhī)

With regards to ending the du‘ā with the praise of Allāh ﷻ, ‘Allāmah Qurṭubī رحمه الله says in his tafsīr, ‘And it is good to read the final verses of Sūratuṣ-Ṣāffāt:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾

Pure is your Rabb, the Rabb of Honour, from what they ascribe. And may peace be on the Messengers. And All Praise is for Allāh, Rabb of all the worlds. (37:180-182)

Similarly, ‘Allāmah Qurṭubī رحمه الله says, ‘It is desirable for one to recite at the end of the du‘ā similar to what the people of Jannah will say,

وَأُخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And the end of our prayer is that All Praise is for Allāh, Rabb of all the worlds.

Imām Nawawī رحمہ اللہ has said, ‘The ‘Ulamā unanimously agree that it is mustahabb to begin the du‘ā with the praise of Allāh ﷻ and salutations upon Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and to end it in the same manner.’

5. To show humility before Allāh ﷻ

When making du‘ā one should use words which show humility, as humility is very much beloved to Allāh ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

Indeed, Allāh likes it when His servant says,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، إِنِّي قَدْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي، فَاعْفِرْ لِي
ذُنُوبِي، إِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

There is no deity but You. Indeed, I have wronged myself so forgive my sins. Indeed, there is none who forgives sins except You.

He ﷺ says, ‘My servant has understood that he has a Rabb Who forgives and also punishes.’
(Al-Hākim)

The du‘ā of Sayyidunā Yūsuf عليه السلام has been mentioned in the Qur’ān:

فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ أَنْتَ وَلِيّٰ فِى الدُّنْيَا وَٱلْآخِرَةِ
تَوَفَّنِىْ مُسْلِمًا وَٱلْحَقِّىْنَ بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٠١﴾

O the Creator of the heavens and earth! You are my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter, Grant me death as a Muslim and join me with the righteous (in the Hereafter). (12:101)

In this du‘ā, Sayyidunā Yūsuf عليه السلام firstly expresses humility by mentioning the greatness of Allāh سُبْحٰنَهُ وَبَعْدَهُ and him being in need of His Protection. Thereafter, he asks to be granted death upon Islām and the company of the righteous in the Hereafter.

6. To repeat each supplication thrice

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd has said,
When he (Nabī ﷺ) would make du‘ā, he would make du‘ā thrice, and when he would ask, he would ask thrice. (Muslim)

If one is able to, he should repeat every supplication three times. If this is not possible, then one should

at least repeat the supplication thrice when asking for something important.

7. To cry when making du‘ā

Crying before Allāh ﷻ shows one’s complete dependency upon Him and is a means of attracting His Mercy. Rasūlullāh ﷺ would cry profusely before Allāh ﷻ. Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibnul-‘Āṣ ﷺ has said, ‘I came to Nabī ﷺ whilst he was performing ṣalāh and a sound was coming from his chest (due to crying) similar to the sound of a boiling pot.’ (Aḥmad)

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibnul-‘Āṣ ﷺ has also narrated that Nabī ﷺ once recited a verse of the Qur’ān which contains the du‘ā of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام:

رَبِّ اِنَّهُمْ اضَلَّلْنٰ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِىْ فَاِنَّهٗ مِنِّىْ

O my Rabb! Indeed, they (the idols) have misled many a people. So whoever follows me indeed belongs to me. (14:36)

And another verse which contains the du‘ā of Sayyidunā ‘Īsā عليه السلام:

إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ ۚ وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ

الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

If You punish them, they are Your slaves and if You forgive them then indeed, You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. (5:118)

He then lifted his hands and said, ‘O Allāh! My Ummah! My Ummah!’ And cried. Allāh ﷻ then said, ‘O Jibra’īl! Go to Muḥammad (ﷺ), and your Rabb knows best, then ask him as to what is making him cry?’ Sayyidunā Jibra’īl عليه السلام came to him and then asked. Rasūlullāh (ﷺ) informed him as to what he had said, and He (Allāh ﷻ) knows best. Allāh then said, ‘O Jibra’īl! Go to Muḥammad (ﷺ) and say, “Indeed, we will please you regarding your Ummah and not make you sad.”’ (Muslim)

Therefore, one should cry before Allāh ﷻ whilst supplicating. However, if one is unable to cry, he should pretend to cry, as Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

ابْكُوا، فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَبْكُوا فَبَاكُوا

Cry. If you cannot cry, pretend to cry. (Ibn Mājah)

8. To make du‘ā softly

It is preferable to make du‘ā softly. There is more humility in making du‘ā softly and less chance of ostentation. Allāh ﷻ has commanded us in the Glorious Qur‘ān:

أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً

Call upon your Rabb with humility and in a soft voice. (7:55)

It is also permissible to make du‘ā in an audible voice, but one should be careful not to cause inconvenience to others, i.e. those who are sleeping, performing salāh, engaged in individual du‘ā, etc.

9. To say Āmīn at the end of the du‘ā

Āmīn means, ‘O Allāh! Accept.’ If du‘ā is made in a gathering, Āmīn should be said after every du‘ā by those who are following the du‘ā; and if it is made individually, Āmīn should be said only at the end of the du‘ā.

10. To pass the hands over the face at the end of the du‘ā

The hands should be passed over the face after completing the du‘ā. Nabi ﷺ has said,

سَلُوا اللَّهَ بِطُؤُنِ أَكْفُكُمْ، وَلَا تَسْأَلُوهُ بِظُهُورِهَا، فَإِذَا
فَرَغْتُمْ، فَاْمَسَحُوا بِهَا وُجُوْهَكُمْ

Ask Allāh with the inside of your palms and not the outside. When you finish, pass them over your faces. (Abū Dāwūd)

Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ has also narrated that when Rasūlullāh ﷺ would raise his hands in du‘ā, he would not drop them until he passed them over the face. (At-Tirmidhī)

11. To make du‘ā in times of difficulty and ease

Usually, we only turn to Allāh ﷻ when we find ourselves in a desperate situation. However, we should make an effort to ask from Allāh ﷻ in all situations, even when there is no apparent need. By doing so, we will build such a connection with Allāh ﷻ that when we are in dire need, our du‘ā will be readily accepted. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَسْتَجِيبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ عِنْدَ الشَّدَائِدِ وَالْكَرْبِ
فَلْيُكْثِرِ الدُّعَاءَ فِي الرَّخَاءِ

One who desires that Allāh accepts his du‘ā in times of difficulty and grief, should make abundant du‘ā when in ease. (At-Tirmidhī)

12. To make du‘ā in places, moments and situations where acceptance of du‘ā is promised

We should not wait for the opportunity of being in blessed places or blessed moments to make du‘ā. However, whenever we are granted such blessed opportunities, then we should make the most of them and make as much du‘ā as possible, as there are more chances of our du‘ās being accepted in blessed places and blessed moments, e.g. in the Ḥaramayn or during the month of Ramaḍān.

Similarly, we should make the most of those situations regarding which Nabī ﷺ has informed us that du‘ās are accepted in them. For example, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

ثَلَاثُ دَعَوَاتٍ مُسْتَجَابَاتٌ لَا شَكَّ فِيهِنَّ: دَعْوَةُ الْوَالِدِ،
وَدَعْوَةُ الْمُسَافِرِ، وَدَعْوَةُ الْمَظْلُومِ

There are three types of du‘ā which are accepted without any doubt: the du‘ā of a father, the du‘ā of a traveller and the du‘ā of an oppressed person. (Abū Dāwūd)

13. To use one's good deeds as a means of getting one's du'ās accepted

An effective method of ensuring that one's du'ā is accepted is to present a good deed before Allāh ﷻ which one feels was carried out solely for His Pleasure. It is hoped that through the barakah (blessing) of this good deed, Allāh ﷻ will shower His Mercy and accept the du'ā. For example, after one has recited Sūrah Yā Sīn, he should say, 'O Allāh! Through the barakah of this recitation, accept my du'ā.'

The famous Ḥadīth, commonly known as the 'Ḥadīth of the Cave', narrated by Imām Bukhārī رحمه الله is a perfect example of this. This Ḥadīth revolves around the story of three men who were trapped inside a cave due to a boulder blocking the mouth of the cave. In order to exit the cave, each of the three men mentioned a good deed of theirs which they carried out solely for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ so that Allāh ﷻ would free them from the cave. When the first person mentioned his good deed and made du'ā, the boulder moved a little. When the second person mentioned his good deed and made du'ā, the boulder moved a little more. After

the third person mentioned his good deed and made du‘ā, the boulder again moved a little and now they were able to leave the cave with ease.

If one adheres to all of these etiquettes when making du‘ā, the chances of his du‘ā being accepted will increase greatly. May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfīq to bring these etiquettes into our du‘ās and make us from amongst those fortunate souls whose du‘ās are readily accepted. Āmīn.

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